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OPINIONS AND DECLARATIONS RENDERED BY THE INTER- NATIONAL COMMISSION ON ZOOLOGICAL NOMENCLATURE

Edited by

FRANCIS HEMMING, C.M.G., C.B.E.
Secretary to the Commission

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OPINION 205

Rejection of the generic name *Phoranthella* Townsend
(Class Insecta, Order Diptera), as published in 1915,
as a *nomen nudum*



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INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON ZOOLOGICAL NOMENCLATURE

COMPOSITION AT THE TIME OF THE ADOPTION OF THE RULING GIVEN IN OPINION 205

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OPINION 205

REJECTION OF THE GENERIC NAME "PHORANTHELLA" TOWNSEND (CLASS INSECTA, ORDER DIPTERA), AS PUBLISHED IN 1915, AS A "NOMEN NUDUM"

RULING :—(1) As published by Townsend in 1915, the specific name *Phoranthella morrisoni* (Class Insecta, Order Diptera) is a *nomen nudum*, and, consequently, as at that date, the generic name *Phoranthella* Townsend, 1915, which depends for its recognition solely upon the status of the name of its type species, is also a *nomen nudum*. (2) The name *Phoranthella* Townsend, 1915, is hereby placed on the *Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Generic Names in Zoology* as Name No. 10. (3) The specific name *morrisoni* Townsend, 1915, as published in the combination *Phoranthella morrisoni*, is hereby placed on the *Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Specific Names in Zoology* as Name No. 9.

I.—THE STATEMENT OF THE CASE

On 29th January 1931, the late Dr. J. M. Aldrich (*United States National Museum, Washington, D.C., U.S.A.*) submitted an application to the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature, in which he asked for a ruling on the question whether the generic name *Phoranthella* Townsend, 1915, and the specific name *Phoranthella morrisoni* Townsend, 1915, had been duly published with "indications" within the meaning of Proviso (a) to Article 25 of the *Règles*. This application which, as explained in paragraph 3 below, was many years later published in the *Bulletin of Zoological Nomenclature*, was as follows :—

ON THE STATUS OF THE GENERIC NAME
"PHORANTHELLA" TOWNSEND, 1915
(CLASS INSECTA, ORDER DIPTERA)

By J. M. ALDRICH
(Commission's reference Z.N.(S.)103.)

Townsend, 1915, *Proc. biol. Soc. Wash.* **18** : 23, has this :—

Phoranthella new genus

Genotype, *Phoranthella morrisoni* Townsend new name for *Phorantha (Hyalomyia) occidentis* Coquillet p.p., 1897, Rev. Tach. 44 (nec *Hyalomyia occidentis* Walker, 1856 Diptera Saundersiana, 260)—Holotype labeled by Coqt. as above, loc. Georgia (Morrison). Type No. 19139 U.S.N.M. ♀.

Coquillet's series included specimens from 12 localities, in probably 40 specimens.

Without stating that the whole series was misidentified by Coquillet (note the "p.p."), Townsend has taken out one specimen as misidentified and made it the type of a new species without further description. In other words, there is no description of *morrisoni* either by Townsend or Coquillet.

Question : Does *morrisoni* have any standing ?

Of course, without the "pro parte" this would have been an ordinary case. But with it a new element comes in.

The genus, I think, falls if the species has no standing ; but the status of the species interests me most.

II.—THE SUBSEQUENT HISTORY OF THE CASE

2. On 21st May 1932, the then Secretary to the Commission (the late Dr. C. W. Stiles) wrote to Dr. C. H. T. Townsend (*Rio Tapajós, Pará, Brazil*), the author of the names, the availability of which had been questioned by Dr. Aldrich, and asked him to furnish a memorandum stating his "interpretation in the premises". On 11th July 1932, Dr. Townsend replied as follows :—

I consider that Coquillet's description functions for *morrisoni* TT. To fix the species beyond doubt, I designated his Georgia specimen as holotype and gave it a U.S.N.M. type number.

If *morrisoni* TT falls, then many of Coquillet's Revision-of-Tachinidae species fall with it! His descriptions will usually fit more than one species and many of his species were mixed-species.

3. No further progress had been made with the consideration of Dr. Aldrich's application by the time that in 1938 the papers relating to it and other current cases were transferred to the care of Mr. Francis Hemming who in October 1936 had been elected Secretary to the Commission on the retirement of Dr. Stiles. On receipt, the documents relating to this case were given the

Registered Number Z.N.(S.)103. It had not been possible to take any action on this application when in September 1939 the records of the Commission were evacuated from London to the country as a precaution against the risk of destruction through air raids. The Secretariat of the Commission in London was re-opened in 1942 and steps were immediately taken to establish the *Bulletin of Zoological Nomenclature* as a means for bringing to the attention of zoologists applications submitted to the Commission for decision. Work was at once started on outstanding applications with a view to arranging for their publication in the newly-established *Bulletin*. The present application was sent to the printer in September 1944, but, owing to difficulties arising from paper rationing, shortage of labour at the printing works and similar causes, publication did not actually take place until June 1946 (*Bull. zool. Nomencl.* 1 : 171).

4. The publication of Dr. Aldrich's application elicited the following comment, which was received on 6th January 1948 from Professor L. di Caporiacco (*University of Parma, Italy*) :—

Townsend's statement that *Phoranthella morrisoni* Townsend is a new name for *Phorantha (Hyalomyia) occidentis* Coquillett p.p. means only that this "new" species differs in some way from *Phorantha occidentis* Coquillett. Townsend does not, however, say in what way it differs. In my opinion, the name *Phoranthella morrisoni* Townsend is a *nomen nudum*, and the generic name *Phoranthella* falls with the specific name.

III.—THE DECISION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON ZOOLOGICAL NOMENCLATURE

5. The present application was considered by the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature at the Thirteenth Meeting of its Paris Session held at the Sorbonne in the Amphithéâtre Louis-Liard on Monday, 26th July 1948 at 17.30 hours. The following is an extract from the portion of the Official Record of the Proceedings of the International Commission setting out (1) the discussion which took place on the present application at the foregoing meeting, and (2) the decision then reached on it

by the Commission (Paris Session, 13th Meeting, Conclusion 26) (1950, *Bull. zool. Nomencl.* 4 : 382—383) :—

(1) THE COMMISSION had under consideration an application submitted by the late Dr. J. M. Aldrich (U.S.A.) (file Z.N.(S.)103) for a ruling on the question whether (a) a specific name based upon a single specimen of a previously named and described species, and (b) a generic name based upon such a specific name, have any availability under the *Règles*, when no characters are given for the species or genus so named, other than that the type specimen of the species was one of the specimens included in error by a previous author among the type material of another species described by that author (Aldrich, 1946, *Bull. zool. Nomencl.* 1 : 171). Dr. Aldrich had illustrated the problem which he had submitted by citing the case of the nominal species *Phoranthella morrisoni* Townsend, 1915 (Class Insecta, Order Diptera), and the generic name *Phoranthella* then published by Townsend for the first time. The above species was designated by Townsend as the type species of the genus *Phoranthella* and accordingly the generic name *Phoranthella* would be an available name, if the name of the nominal species *Phoranthella morrisoni* Townsend could be regarded as an available name. But the only statement made by its author in regard to this species was that it was based upon one specified example of the type series of another species described by a different author (*Phorantha (Hyalomyia) occidentis* Coquillet, 1897). Dr. Aldrich had observed that Coquillet's series of *occidentis* consisted of some 40 specimens from 12 localities, and that Townsend had taken out only one specimen as misidentified ; no description of *Phoranthella morrisoni* had been published by Townsend or Coquillet.

It was pointed out that under the ruling in *Opinion 1* in no case could a museum label or specimen be accepted as an "indication" and therefore that the name *Phoranthella morrisoni* could not be regarded as having been accompanied by an "indication" at the time when it

was first published (1915). As at that date, therefore, the above name was a *nomen nudum*. It followed that, as at 1915, the generic name *Phoranthella* was also a *nomen nudum*, for its identity turned solely upon the status of the nominal species designated as its type species.

(2) THE COMMISSION agreed :—

- (1) that, as published by Townsend in 1915, the specific name *Phoranthella morrisoni* (Class Insecta, Order Diptera), was a *nomen nudum*, and consequently, as at that date, the generic name *Phoranthella* Townsend, 1915, which depended for its recognition solely upon the status of the name of its type species, was also a *nomen nudum* ;
- (2) that the name *Phoranthella* Townsend, 1915, should be added to the *Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Generic Names in Zoology* and that the trivial name *morrisoni* Townsend, 1915 (as published in the binominal combination *Phoranthella morrisoni*), should be added to the *Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Specific Trivial Names in Zoology* ;
- (3) to render an *Opinion* recording the decisions specified in (1) and (2) above.

6. The following are the original references for the names which appear in the decision set out in the immediately preceding paragraph :—

morrisoni, Phoranthella, Townsend, 1915, *Proc. biol. Soc. Wash.* **18** : 23

Phoranthella Townsend, 1915, *Proc. biol. Soc. Wash.* **18** : 23

7. The decision taken in this case was reported to, and approved by, the Section on Nomenclature of the Thirteenth International

Congress of Zoology, Paris, 1948, at its Fifth Meeting held on 26th July 1948 (1950, *Bull. zool. Nomencl.* 5 : 107).

8. The Ruling given in the present *Opinion* was concurred in by the sixteen (16) Commissioners and Alternate Commissioners present at the Paris Session of the International Commission, namely :

Beltrán *vice* Cabrera ; Boschma ; Bradley ; di Caporiacco ; Hemming ; Hindle *vice* Jordan ; Jorge *vice* do Amaral ; Kirby *vice* Stoll ; Lemche *vice* Dymond ; Mansour *vice* Hankó ; Metcalf *vice* Peters ; Riley *vice* Calman ; Rode ; Spärck *vice* Mortensen ; van Straelen *vice* Richter ; Usinger *vice* Vokes.

9. The Ruling given in the present *Opinion* was dissented from by no Commissioner or Alternate Commissioner present at the Paris Session.

10. At the time of the adoption of the Ruling given in the present *Opinion*, the expression prescribed for the second portion of the binomen which constitutes the scientific name of a species was the expression "trivial name" and the *Official List* reserved for recording such names was styled the *Official List of Specific Trivial Names in Zoology*, the word "trivial" appearing also in the title of the *Official Index* reserved for recording rejected and invalid names of this category. Under a decision taken by the Fourteenth International Congress of Zoology, Copenhagen, 1953, the expression "specific name" was substituted for the expression "trivial name" and corresponding changes were made in the titles of the *Official List* and *Official Index* of such names (1953, *Copenhagen Decisions zool. Nomencl.* : 21). The changes in terminology so adopted have been incorporated in the Ruling given in the present *Opinion*.

11. The prescribed procedures were duly complied with by the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature in dealing with the present case, and the present *Opinion* is accordingly hereby rendered in the name of the said International Commission

by the under-signed Francis Hemming, Secretary to the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature, in virtue of all and every the powers conferred upon him in that behalf.

12. The present *Opinion* shall be known as *Opinion Two Hundred and Five (205)* of the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature.

DONE in London this Nineteenth day of November, Nineteen Hundred and Fifty-Three.

*Secretary to the International Commission
on Zoological Nomenclature*

FRANCIS HEMMING

